Judge Denies Intention Of Criticizing Center

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Superior Court Judge Alfred Burka yesterday denied that he had any intention of criticizing personnel of the Blackman's Development Center during the Dec. 16 sentencing of a man with a history of drug use.

An official transcript of the proceeding reports the judge as telling the defendant, Sonny Brown, "Blackman's Development Center is not for you. That's still with a bunch of criminals. They're not the type of people that you could associate with and feel comfortable."

Yesterday the judge took issue with a story in The Washington Post on Tuesday quoting from the transcript and interpreting the judge's comment as referring to the center's personnel.

"It was not my intention to speak at all of the personnel," the judge told a reporter. "I was shocked to see that you made that inference." He also said he thought the reporter was out "to smear' him.

The judge said he was a supporter of the center, which runs a drug treatment program, staffed in part by persons who have criminal records.

It was founded by Gen. Hassan Jeru-Ahmed, an ex-offender who has said that it was his intention to gather a staff including other ex-offenders with personal knowledge of the problems of addiction.

The center often takes custody of persons with drug problems who are awaiting trial on criminal charges.